



Mountain State Sierran

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Shale Gas Drilling Bad for your Health

Beth Little

Although we keep hearing about health problems of people and animals near shale gas drilling sites, there is no official recognition of a need for better regulations to protect public health. There are studies of risks or compilations of cases, but **until there is a serious, ongoing, peer-reviewed scientific study of cause-and-effect, the industry can cry "All evidence is anecdotal!"**

The information on the risks of health impacts from shale gas drilling is piling up:

- In March 2012 researchers at the Colorado School of Public Health report that air pollution caused by hydraulic fracturing may contribute to acute and chronic health problems for people living near drilling sites. They identified a number of potentially toxic hydrocarbons in the air near wells: benzene, ethylbenzene, toluene, xylene, heptane, octane, diethylbenzene and more.

<http://www.erieising.com/human-health-risk-assessment-of-air-emissions-from-development-of-unconventional-natural-gas-resources/>

- Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (TCEQ) finds that releases of volatile organic compounds from oil and gas operations increased 60 percent over five years.

http://www.tceq.texas.gov/assets/public/implementation/air/sip/dfw/ad_2011/10022SIP_ado_111811.pdf

- TCEQ found elevated benzene levels at 21 of 94 Barnett well sites tested.

http://www.nola.com/business/index.ssf/2010/01/texas_agency_finds_high_benzen.html

- Baylor University reported a higher incidence of asthma in children living in the Barnett shale region: asthma rates for children in Tarrant County were more than twice the national average.

<http://www.baylor.edu/mediacommunications/news.php?action=story&story=98474>

- In 2011 the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) reported higher levels of methane, butane, propane and other chemicals coming out of the gas fields of northern Colorado and eastern Utah. And Wyoming's drilling fields report ozone levels as high as 124 parts per billion (ppb) – higher than Los Angeles levels and far higher than EPA's maximum level of 75 ppb.

http://www.denverpost.com/business/ci_20042330 ;
"Human Health Risk Assessment of Air Emissions from Development of Unconventional Natural Gas Resources." 2/11/2012, <http://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0048969712001933>

- October 2012: Pennsylvania residents living near gas facilities have high incidences of negative health symptoms. <http://www.earthworksaction.org/files/publications/Health-Report-Summary-FINAL.pdf>

Some reports recommend further scientific study:

- "An Exploratory Study of Air Quality Near Natural Gas Operations" by TEDX (The Endocrine Disruption Exchange) found selected polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons (PAHs) were at concentrations greater than those at which prenatally exposed children in urban studies had lower developmental and IQ scores.

The study recommended, "The human and environmental health impacts of the NMHCs, which are ozone precursors, should be examined further given that the natural gas industry is now operating in close proximity to human residences and public lands."

<http://www.endocrinedisruption.com/chemicals.air.php>

- A survey documenting numerous cases of animal and owner health problems with potential links to gas drilling concluded, "Complete evidence regarding health impacts of gas drilling cannot be obtained due to incomplete testing and disclosure of chemicals, and nondisclosure agreements. Without rigorous scientific studies, the gas drilling boom sweeping the world will remain an uncontrolled health experiment on an enormous scale."

Impacts of Gas Drilling on Human and Animal Health, by Michelle Bamberger and Robert E. Oswald, NEW SOLUTIONS, Vol. 22(1) 51-77, 2012 (http://www.slopefarms.com/wp-content/uploads/2012/01/Bamberger_Oswald_NS22_in_press.pdf)

There are doctors calling for scientific studies. Last October more than 250 health professionals in New York signed on to a letter asking state officials to study health risks related to gas drilling before permitting hydraulic fracturing in the state. Physicians, scientists, and medical groups in New York have been warning the governor that the health risks of fracking are real and ominous, based on evidence from fracking communities in Texas, Wyoming, Louisiana, North Dakota, Pennsylvania and other states.

Marilyn J. Heine, M.D., President of the Pennsylvania Medical Society, said, "Regardless of the environmental controversy, and regardless of how slowly or how quickly this new industry develops, we recognize that there is already a need to conduct epidemiological studies and to educate ourselves and the public about the best ways to keep our communities healthy. Nothing frustrates me more than having my medical expertise hand-cuffed by lack of research."

In Canada, New Brunswick's chief medical officer of health says the Alward government needs to take "targeted and strategic actions" to prevent and mitigate any negative health impacts associated with the development of the shale gas industry in the province. "There are social and community health risks from this industry," Dr. Eilish Cleary states in her 82-page report. Cleary recommends requiring a health impact assessment and monitoring the health of the population on an ongoing basis to detect adverse impacts.

The New Brunswick College of Family Physicians is calling for a moratorium on hydraulic fracturing in the province until more research is done on the controversial process used to extract shale gas. President Dr. Anick Pelletier wrote in a recent letter to members of the legislature, "By this letter, we are urging you to protect our valuable resources and the public's health by putting a moratorium on hydraulic fracturing development in New Brunswick until further research can prove that the benefits clearly outweigh the risk of this practice." The group, which represents about 700 family doctors in the province, is concerned about the potential contamination of public water supplies, as well as possible air pollution or toxic spills.

So why aren't there any studies of the actual impacts to health from fracking?

It takes a while to conduct scientific studies — months if not years. It also takes funding, and funding is being politically suppressed.

New York doctors built their case for a rigorous independent Health Impact Assessment (HIA) of fracking, testified before the state Assembly and wrote Cuomo to demand action. But the governor declined to fund an HIA in his budget.

When Pennsylvania legislators tried to earmark about 1 percent of the state's \$200 million in drilling impact fees to establish an official state registry for individuals who claim injury or illness due to drilling, Corbett's office worked to kill the effort.

And in the U.S. Congress a group of energy leaders in the House of Representatives wrote Health and Human Services Secretary Kathleen Sebelius to warn her to exercise caution about allowing the U.S. Center for Disease Control and Prevention to study the health effects of fracking. They singled out a particular CDC administrator as unsuitable to conduct the study. His thought crime: he had once been quoted as saying fracking fluids contain "potentially hazardous chemical classes," and work near certain drilling sites "is turning up data of concern."

When genuine science poses a threat, the industry calls on politicians to banish genuine science. The GOP House members, Corbett, and Cuomo have answered that call.



Explore, enjoy and protect the planet

Health Side Bar

So, what about the workers?

There is a lot of concern about health impacts on people living near shale gas drilling and fracking, but the workers are right there on the site breathing the air and handling the spills of toxic chemicals.

A recent two-year assessment by the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH) found that 79 percent of air samples taken at frack sites exceeded NIOSH Recommended Exposure Limits for silica. Silica sand is a major component of the fracking process. The sand is mixed with large volumes of water and chemical additives and injected under high pressure by drilling into shale rock. Massive quantities of sand are used and workers are at risk of high levels of exposure during multiple points of the fracking process, putting them at risk of developing silicosis, lung cancer and other debilitating diseases. The AFL-CIO, United Mine Workers of America (UMWA) and United Steelworkers (USW) have sent a letter of concern to federal safety agencies.

Health hazards aren't the worst of it. The rate of fatal occupational injuries for workers in oil and gas extraction industries is seven times higher than the fatality rate for all U.S. workers. Between 2003 and 2009, there were 27.5 deaths per 100,000 workers. The leading cause of death is motor vehicle accidents. This is partly due to an exemption from federal highway safety rules that allow truckers to work longer hours than drivers in most other industries.

Example: After working 17 hours straight at a natural gas well in Ohio, Timothy Roth and three other crew members climbed into their company truck around 10 o'clock one night last July and began their four-hour drive back to their drilling service company's shop in West Virginia. When they were just 10 minutes from home, the driver fell asleep at the wheel. The truck veered off the highway and slammed into a sign that sheared off part of the vehicle's side, killing Mr. Roth. About two months before the fatal crash, Mr. Roth nearly died in a similar accident when another co-worker with the same company fell asleep at the wheel after a long shift and ran the company's truck into a pole.

So when we ask Congress to close the Halliburton loophole that exempts fracking from the Safe Drinking Water Act and other environmental laws, we should include the highway safety rules. These exemptions, introduced during Vice-President Dick Cheney's administration by industry lobbyists, are clearly meant to place profits before people.

Workshop for Citizens to Monitor Coal Ash Permits

Are Coal Ash Permit Violations "Falling Through the Cracks?"

Power Plants File Reports – but Does Anybody Look at Them?

Do they Pour Toxics into our Waters and Nobody Blows the Whistle?

Come learn how to monitor Coal Ash Permits from the safety and comfort of home.

Coal ash is dumped all over West Virginia, wherever there is a coal-fired power plant. After the coal burns, the ash has to be disposed of. That means it is trucked to a dump site, where groundwater and rain cause water to flow through and out of ash ponds.

Coal ash contains many toxics. Each outflow from an ash pond is regulated with a permit from the West Virginia Department of Environmental Protection (WVDEP). The permit states the maximum allowable discharge of a range of pollutants, such as arsenic and lead.

The ash pond operators are required to file "discharge monitoring reports," documenting the actual amounts of the pollutants they discharge. **But here's the catch:** Sometimes nobody looks at these reports! They go into a file at WVDEP. It is entirely possible that the reports show violations of the permits, but if nobody looks at them, then clearly violations can go unnoticed with no enforcement.

This is exactly what happened at Mon Power's Albright power plant. Folks doing some research on another issue stumbled on serious violations of arsenic discharges. Subsequently this led to major enforcement action that would not have happened if left to the WVDEP.

That's where you come in! With some simple basic training, you can learn how to review discharge reports for violations. You can do it online and at home once you learn the basics. It's one way of "holding polluters' feet to the fire," to make sure they are not putting excessive toxics into our streams.

West Virginia Sierra Club is holding two workshops to learn how to review ash pond discharge reports. Our "instructor" is Mike Becher of Appalachian Mountain Advocates. Pick the session most convenient for you. We'll spend a Saturday morning on the simple basic skills, and when you leave you will be ready to become a citizen coal ash permit monitor — a.k.a. member of the **Order of Ash Kickers** (kidding ... you'll be a citizen monitor — but you'll feel like an ash kicker!)

Workshop Program

Workshop dates (participants choose one)

Charleston, January 5, 9:30 AM – 12:30 PM

WV Citizen Action Group office, 1500 Dixie Street

Morgantown, January 12, 9:30 AM – 12:30 PM

Downstream Strategies office, 295 High Street #3

Program Outline

9:30 AM	Coffee
10:00–10:15	Welcome, Workshop Purpose and Goals
10:15–12:15	How To Monitor Permits
12:15–12:30	Q & A, Wrap-Up

Take Action

Register for one of the Workshops by contacting Jim Sconyers at jimscon@gmail.com or 304-698-9628.

Include your name, email address, phone number, and which session you're registering for.



Workshop for Citizen Gas Well Watchers

We are running a repeat of last year's workshop for citizen volunteers to become **gas well watchers**. Goodness knows there are enough of them to watch — thousands, in fact — as old as early 20th century or as new as today. This workshop will apply to any completed gas well — Marcellus or otherwise.

Working with George Monk and Molly Schaffnit, the West Virginia Chapter has developed a common-sense online experience suitable for all. The workshop is organized into three sessions, each with its target dates. Each session will include George and Molly's YouTube videos, as well as text material and "homework." Workshop participants will be able to view and read the material on a flexible schedule. A session will be followed up with a conference call for participant discussion and questions-and-answers with project leaders. Conference calls are free to callers, and there will be two date/time options for the conference call for each session. We finish the workshop with a field trip to enable participants to experience the "real thing."

Most of the training is simple and observational. The training will show what to look for, how to "see" a well site, and so on. There is one element that involves an actual scientific test, using materials similar to litmus paper. That session shows clearly how-to-do-it. And we provide the required test materials to participants at no cost.

Once volunteers register for the workshop, they will receive the link to the project website, where all necessary information will be available. In addition, participants will receive the call-in number and code for all the conference calls.

In case a person is interested but unable to access YouTube videos, we can provide alternatives suitable for slower connections. The workshop is in March — just in time for the outdoor well-watching season!

The Gas Well Workshop is open to everyone. We strongly encourage folks to participate who expect and intend to get out in the field afterwards and apply their training to observing and reporting on gas wells.

Workshop Schedule

Session 1

Videos and materials	March 10 – 12
Conference calls	March 13, 6:00 PM, or March 14, 7:00 PM

Session 2

Videos and materials	March 17 – 19
Conference calls	March 20, 6:00 PM, or March 21, 7:00 PM

Session 3

Videos and materials	March 24 – 26
Conference calls	March 27, 6:00 PM, or March 28, 7:00 PM

Field Trip

South	March 30
North	March 31

For more information or to register for the workshop, contact Jim at: jimscon@gmail.com or 304-698-9628.

View from the Chair — Jim Sconyers

Time to Overturn Citizens United

The West Virginia Sierra Club is preeminently an environmental organization. But sometimes the fine line between environment and other human domains can become blurry. Politics provides some good examples.

You have probably heard about the U.S. Supreme Court's decision known as Citizens United. This was a decision that established the principles that: first, corporations are people, with the same rights as people, and second, that corporations have a constitutional right to spend unlimited money to influence election outcomes in electoral campaigns with virtually no accountability.

Needless to say, the great majority of Americans found this decision entirely wrong-headed and antidemocratic, opening the political process for dramatically expanded moral and ethical corruption. Disapproval of the court's determination crosses all party and ideological lines — Democrats, Republicans, liberals, and conservatives — all believe, by wide margins, that Citizens United is bad for America.

Fine, you might say, but why are you talking about it here in the *Mountain State Sierran*? And why did a group of West Virginia Sierrans join with folks from West Virginians for Democracy (WVFD) and the West Virginia Citizen Action Group (WVCAG) recently to lobby members of the West Virginia Legislature?

As the consequences of the Citizens United decision played out over the past two years, some of the biggest corporate players have been the most anti-environment corporations on the planet. PACs and Super PACs have poured hundreds of millions of dollars into the campaigns of the candidates they expect to advance the anti-environment agenda. We've seen this not only at the national level, but here at the state level in West Virginia too. Cynics would say that the wealthy corporate beneficiaries of Citizens United have, in many cases — let's face it — bought their elected office holders. These electees then go on to make energy and climate and waste and health and all manner of environmental policy. Only the most naive of us can pretend that bad environmental policy and massive industry campaign spending are simply coincidences.

Sierra Club and allies such as WVFD, WVCAG, Public Citizen, and others know that the undemocratic forces unleashed by Citizens United must be reversed. That's why we work together in a movement that may culminate in a constitutional amendment or other means to undo the grievous damage Citizens United has done to our cherished democracy.

Funded from Longview Settlement

Appalachian Stewardship Foundation Awards 2012 Grants

Bill DePaulo

Reported here are the grants made this year by the Appalachian Stewards Foundation (ASF). These grants were all funded from the first \$500,000 check received from Longview as part of the settlement negotiated by Joe Lovett and Jim Kotcon on behalf of Sierra Club, Trout Unlimited and National Parks Conservation Association (NPCA), our partners in the challenge to Longview's air quality permit application.

You may recall that we got significant concessions from Longview in the air emission requirements (all that our expert witness could justify) plus a commitment to fund environmental remediation in the amount of \$500,000 per year for ten years, and \$300,000 per year thereafter for the life of the plant.

Under the terms of the settlement, Longview got to designate two non-voting directors to the ASF board, and each of the three organizations nominated one voting member each to the board. Larry Harris represents Trout Unlimited on ASF's board, Kathy Harman-Stokes represents NPCA, and I represent WV Sierra Club.

Although Longview would get any "credits" that our grants might generate under a "cap and trade" system (popular at the time of the settlement but virtually non-existent now), none of our grants have included any credits and, given the current political environment, none are likely in the foreseeable future. Longview has no vote in ASF's decision to approve or disapprove any grant.

We have had public meetings — at Hawks Nest and at Davis & Elkins College — at which applicants made presentations and where we awarded grants after each meeting. A summary of our grants policy appears at appalachianstewards.org/index.php/grants, where you may also find an attachment with the entire grant policy. In the first round, we approved \$132,000 in grants; in round two, we approved \$121,000 in grants.

The \$253,400 total for the year reflects a policy decision of the ASF board to fund a reserve of approximately \$200,000 per year for the first ten years. Our objective with the reserve is to insure that ASF would survive Longview's demise, and to sustain (or increase) funding after year ten, when

Longview's contribution is scheduled to drop to \$300,000 per year.

Significantly, we hired Shanda Minney, formerly executive director of the West Virginia Rivers Coalition, as our Executive Director over the past summer. Shanda lives in Elkins and would be happy to hear from any of you:

Shanda Minney
Executive Director
Appalachian Stewardship Foundation
Mobile: 304-591-2526
email: shanda@appalachianstewards.org

Below is a summary of the grants awarded this year. If you would like additional information on any (or all) of the grants, or if you would like to have additional input into ASF's activities, please contact me at 304-342-5588. More information about ASF is also available at the web page appalachianstewards.org.

Grants announced November 13 2012

Energy Efficient West Virginia, Charleston, WV
\$50,000 to fund efforts before the Public Service Commission to require state utilities to adopt Energy Efficiency Programs

West Virginia Rivers Coalition, Elkins, WV
\$27,500 to fund Monitoring Water Quality Impacts of Marcellus Shale Development in WV's and VA's Coldwater Streams

Evening Star Productions, Akron, OH
\$20,000 to fund production costs of *Coal Country 2*, the sequel to Mary Lynn Evans' classic *Coal Country*.

Southern Environmental Law Center, Charlottesville, VA
\$20,000 to fund Leading Virginia and the Southeast to a Clean Energy Future, efforts before the Virginia Public Service Commission to require VA utilities to adopt energy efficiency programs

Keeper of the Mountains, Charleston, WV
\$9,500 to fund Kayford Mountain Sustainability Project consisting of solar panels and sustainable water resources



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Student/Limited Income	<input type="checkbox"/> \$25	<input type="checkbox"/> \$35

Contributions, gifts and dues to Sierra Club are not tax deductible; they support our effective, citizen-based advocacy and lobbying efforts. Your dues include \$7.50 for a subscription to *Sierra* magazine and \$1 for your Chapter newsletters.

Enclose a check and mail to Sierra Club, P.O. Box 421041, Palm Coast, FL 32142-1041 or visit our website www.sierraclub.org

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WV Energy Savers, Terra Alta, WV
\$4,000 to fund CFL bulb replacement

Grants announced August 2, 2012

Shenandoah Valley Network, Luray, VA
\$15,000 to fund the Shenandoah Valley Network Energy Project

Friends of Blackwater, Charleston, WV
\$36,000 to fund the Blackwater Trout Restoration Initiative

University of Virginia, Charlottesville, VA
\$53,900 to fund creation of a large data base on Chemical Status and Trends in Fishery Streams

Friends of the Cheat, Kingwood, WV
\$8,500 to fund the Evaluation of Collaborative AMD Remediation Methods in the Muddy Creek Watershed, WV

University of Virginia, Charlottesville, VA — Dept of Environmental Sciences
\$8,500 to fund research on Evaluating Carbon and Water Cycling in the Weimer Run Watershed, WV

Ohio Valley Environmental Council, Huntington, WV
\$7,500 to fund the Southern Mountain Communities' Clean Water Project

WV Energy Savers, Terra Alta, WV
\$3,000 to fund CFL Bulb Replacement

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Here they go again!

Mon Power's Billion Dollar Boondoggle

Jim Kotcon

Mon Power apparently did not learn any lessons with the defeat of the PATH transmission line last year. Mon Power now proposes to have West Virginia electric consumers pay over \$1.1 billion to purchase an additional 80-percent share of the Harrison Power Plant in Harrison County from another First Energy affiliate, Allegheny Energy Services.

This request was first described in a rate case before the WV Public Service Commission. Because fuel costs have dropped in recent months, Mon Power electric rates should come down as well. But Mon Power proposes to keep them at record high levels to charge WV customers for the Harrison plant purchase.

That 80 percent owned by Allegheny Energy Services has actually been mostly paid off by Ohio customers, but now First Energy wants to shield their Ohio affiliate, because the Ohio electricity market is deregulated, and they expect that coal-fired power plants will not be economically competitive, especially if carbon taxes or other limits on carbon emissions become mandatory. If First Energy can dump the plant on a regulated utility (Mon Power), First Energy stockholders would be protected from market losses.

A key argument for Mon Power is that they need the Harrison plant to meet future generation shortfalls. But at the same time, they are proposing to sell their share of the Pleasants power station, and argue that both transactions are interdependent. If Mon Power really needs the increased generation capacity, it makes no sense to sell their generation capacity at Pleasants. This demonstrates that the transactions are mostly for the convenience of Mon Power, and, contrary to their claims, are not an effort to meet customer needs.

Mon Power's claim (that this transaction is needed to meet needs of Mon Power customers) implies that the Harrison plant's generation is sitting around unused and waiting to be put to work. But in fact, the Harrison plant already has customers, so transferring it to meet Mon Power customer needs means a comparable decrease in generation available for customers in Ohio and elsewhere. The transaction does nothing to increase the total generation going to the grid and is simply "robbing Peter to pay Paul."

Mon Power also claims that the transaction will enhance their ability to generate Alternative and Renewable Energy Credits. But the company's own filings indicate that they already have enough credits and the same is true for Appalachian Power Company (the only other major utility in WV). Plus, WV rules require that credits from coal facilities such as Harrison can be used to meet no more than 10 percent of the Alternative and Renewable Energy Credits needed, so there really is no market to sell the credits from Harrison even if they acquire them.

Mon Power's projected future electricity demand estimates assume 1.4 percent annual increase in electricity demand, suggesting no significant Energy Efficiency (EE) or Demand Response (DR) reductions beyond their current miniscule programs.

The real issue is buried in one of the filings from Mon Power's expert witnesses. "The companies believe that a carbon tax is likely to eventually be promulgated." (Mon Power/PE 2012 Resource Plan, page 13). But the costs of such a carbon tax are not included in any cost estimates. Mon Power says they believe it is coming, but instead of planning for it, their idea is simply to dump an out-dated, dirty plant on WV consumers.

Alternatives Ignored

If nothing is done, it is likely that electricity demand could continue to rise, and new generation would be needed. But why assume that "nothing can be done!"? Electricity demand does NOT have to always go up. Many states (including Ohio and Maryland) already require EE and DR standards from First Energy.

Mon Power says that EE and DR were not recommended because: 1) "they are not a practical solution," 2) DR can result in higher costs (they describe some problems in Maryland), 3) EE resources are not dispatchable, nor can they be metered, 4) load curtailment is not under direct control of Mon Power, and 5) DR rules at PJM (a regional transmission organization) are in flux, and therefore it is difficult to plan for them long-term.

None of these arguments justify adding over a billion dollars to WV ratepayers. Actual costs per kilowatt-hour for EE are less than half the cost of the proposed purchase.

Coal Ash Impoundments

As part of the deal, Mon Power will also assume the "solid waste disposal facilities"

associated with Harrison. New rules on coal ash impoundments are expected soon and will likely require expensive upgrades and increased disposal costs for coal ash. Will additional regulations for coal ash disposal also impact the projected costs, and if so, by how much? This does not appear to be in the proposed rate increase package. It is not clear, but I suspect that First Energy (dba Allegheny Energy Supply) is also dumping onto Mon Power customers the costs of a major future liability for the coal ash disposal.

What You Can Do

Filings in the transfer case (case # 12-1571-E-PC) continue, and the Sierra Club plans to be involved. Send comments asking the PSC to 1) reduce your electric rates, 2) block the transfer of the Harrison power plant to Mon Power, and 3) order Mon Power to adopt aggressive Energy Efficiency and Demand Response programs.

Letters of Protest can be sent to the PSC at their new web-based comment page, at: <http://www.psc.state.wv.us/scripts/onlinecomments/default.cfm>

For more information, contact Jim Kotcon at 304-594-3322.

of wilderness in the Mon National Forest. Big Draft, Spice Run, and Roaring Plains West were permanently protected as wilderness, and Dolly Sods, Cranberry and Otter Creek wilderness lands were expanded. The WV Wilderness Coalition, founded in 2002 by the WV Chapter of the Sierra Club, WV Highlands Conservancy, and The Wilderness Society, persevered in this effort.

Currently, the newly incorporated WV Wilderness Coalition is working to establish the first national monument in West Virginia. The Birthplace of Rivers National Monument will provide enhanced protection for the headwaters of the Cranberry, Cherry, Williams, Gauley, Elk, and Greenbrier Rivers in the southern Monongahela National Forest.

During 2014, the WV Wilderness Coalition plans to have our own local celebrations for the 50th anniversary. These will be coordinated with the national Sierra Club, other interested environmental organizations, and the agencies that manage our Federal wilderness areas. We will keep you posted in the Chapter newsletter as our plans for 2014 develop.

As 50th anniversary coordinator for the West Virginia Chapter, I am looking for some helpers who are enthusiastic about wilderness, who are interested in helping us celebrate, and who may have some ideas about ways we can promote and publicize wilderness during 2014. I hope that means you! We seek involvement by many Chapter members to make all of 2014 the year for wilderness in West Virginia.

If interested, please contact Karen Yarnell at karen.grubb@fairmontstate.edu.

On September 3, 1964, President Lyndon B. Johnson signed the Wilderness Act into law. He is seen here giving the pen used to sign the Act to Alice Zahniser, wife of Howard Zahniser, who worked tirelessly to get the Act through Congress, but died only a few months before it was signed into law.



WILDERNESS ACT NEARLY 50 YEARS OLD

Karen Yarnell

Signed into law in 1964, the Wilderness Act will celebrate its 50th anniversary in 2014. The national Sierra Club is already making plans, and we invite you to get involved and be part of this big national celebration to acknowledge and applaud the major achievement represented by the National Wilderness Preservation System in our country. Help make our celebrations in West Virginia a memorable part of 2014.

Nationwide there are over 100 million acres Congress has added to the Wilderness Preservation system, with more to come over the years. Wilderness designation is the strongest and most permanent protection that can be extended to our Federal public lands. Wilderness areas include wild places in national parks, national forests, wildlife refuges, and western lands of the Bureau of Land Management.

In the Monongahela National Forest of West Virginia, the Dolly Sods Wilderness and Otter Creek Wilderness were established by Congress in 1975. The Cranberry Wilderness and Laurel Fork Wilderness North and South were designated in 1983. In 2009, the Wild Monongahela Act added 37,000 acres

Please contact the Editor for submission guidelines or advertising rates.

Contributions to the newsletter may be sent to the Editor at

celliot2@comcast.net
414 Tyrone Avery Rd.
Morgantown, WV 26508

**Deadline for
Mar/Apr issue
February 7**

Opinions expressed in the **Mountain State Sierran** are those of the contributors and do not necessarily reflect the opinions of the Sierra Club. This newsletter is published bimonthly by the WV Chapter of the Sierra Club and distributed to all paid members.

2013 is Year of the Tree

Carol Nix

We depend on them for the very air we breathe, a source of the materials that make our lives possible. There is no place, city or countryside, that isn't made healthier and more enjoyable by trees.

The Sierra Club is joining several other local groups to ask Morgantown City Council to proclaim 2013 The Year of the Tree (YOTT).

Some benefits of trees are obvious: shade for our playgrounds and trails, habitat for wildlife, windbreaks, landscaping, glare and reflection reduction, erosion control, and a source of medicine. Other services, while not so obvious, are equally important. Studies have shown that trees can reduce stress, and that views of trees can speed the recovery of surgical patients. All other things being equal, school campuses that have trees have higher graduation rates than those without them! Greener urban areas encourage healthy social interaction, and have even been proven to reduce crime.

The goals of this initiative (YOTT) are to bring public attention to local tree treasures, to spread facts and have fun doing it, to get people to look up (!) and encourage tree appreciation through creative, fun activities, to educate about the role of trees in the community (environmental, historical, etc.) and to cultivate community awareness, enthusiasm, and an attitude of gratitude about the place we live.

We expect that City Council will adopt the proclamation when it is presented, so look for lots of local activities happening this year, for example, nominating large or significant trees in each neighborhood, workshops devoted to tree care, art installations honoring these ancient beings, stories connecting our trees to our history, tree plantings and maybe some surprises to recognize these venerable witnesses in our community.

HELP WANTED

CHAPTER IN NEED OF NEW OUTINGS CHAIR

As you can see, without an active Outings Chair, our offering of outings around the state has become quite sparse. If you love being in the outdoors and have some spare time (I know! What's 'spare' time?) to organize a corps of outings leaders, Dan Soeder would be happy to show you the ropes and guide you through the certification process. If you might be interested or if you have questions about the role of a Chapter Outings Chair, please contact Dan at Dan.Soeder@sierraclub.org or djsoeder@yahoo.com or 304-568-2164.

Sierra Club Liability Policies For Chapter Outings

Sierra Club outings are open to everyone, members and non-members alike. Each outing is intended to be a wholesome, safe, and enjoyable experience in the outdoors. Participants must have suitable clothing, gear, and stamina, and are encouraged to select activities that match their individual abilities for outdoor adventures.

The Club offers a variety of outings from "easy" to "moderate" to "strenuous" that suit all activity levels. The difficulty of each outing is clearly designated in the announcement. Reservations are generally not required unless noted, but the outing leader may be contacted in advance for questions about the terrain, the difficulty and recommended gear.

Activities are normally held "rain or shine," but may be postponed at the leader's discretion for safety reasons in the event of inclement weather. Participants are reminded that all outdoor activities carry a degree of risk, and some take place in locations where professional emergency medical aid may be two or more hours away. People with health concerns should consult a physician to determine the advisability of participating in these or similar activities. The leader is responsible for the safety of all participants, and has the final authority to decide whether or not an individual may participate on a specific outing. Sierra Club safety policy requires that helmets be worn on bicycling outings, and a personal flotation device (PFD) be worn when using personal watercraft such as kayaks or canoes.

Unless noted in the announcement, Club outings are intended for adults. Children and

dogs are not normally permitted, unless an outing is so designated. Minors (under 18 years of age) must be accompanied by a parent or a legal guardian, or they must have both 1) a signed permission slip, and 2) the leader's prior consent to participate in the Club outing. Sierra Club outings officially begin and end at the trailhead.

Travel to the official starting point and back, even from an advertised meeting place, is the sole responsibility of each participant. While the Club encourages car-pooling, such arrangements are strictly between the riders and the drivers, and are not a part of the outing. Participants assume full responsibility and liability for all risks associated with such travel.

All participants on Sierra Club outings are required to sign a standard liability waiver, which can be viewed on the web at www.sierraclub.org/outings/chapter/forms or by calling 415-977-5630.

The Sierra Club does not charge for chapter outings, although payment of park entrance fees, a share of campsite rental costs, permit fees, equipment rental charges, etc. may be required from the participants. The Sierra Club practices "leave-no-trace" trail techniques, including hiking and camping on durable surfaces, minimizing campfire impacts, packing out all trash, respecting wildlife, being considerate of other visitors, and leaving the environment as it was found.

The Sierra Club's California Seller of Travel identification number is CST 2087766-40. Registration as a seller of travel does not constitute approval by the State of California.

MONONGAHELA GROUP OUTINGS

Saturday, Jan 19, 1–2:30 pm

Year of the Tree Celebration

Core Arboretum, Morgantown

Join us for one of the first official Morgantown "Year of the Tree" events as we take a guided walk through the WVU Arboretum with Jon Weems, director of the arboretum, and talk about the oldest trees there.

Meet at the main entrance to the Arboretum at 1pm. We plan to walk for about an hour and a half. The Arboretum is steep in places, so dress appropriately in warm layers and winter footwear. This event is family friendly. Please contact Gwen Jones at 304-599-5815 if you are interested in attending.



Saturday, Feb 9, 10 am – 3 pm

Winterfest II

Coopers Rock State Forest

Please come and join in the fun as the Coopers Rock Foundation hosts the second annual Winterfest up at Coopers Rock State Forest. The fun begins at 10am and continues until 3pm with events throughout the day. We invite you to rent cross country skis, go on a guided hike, try out our paintball biathlon, or enter our women's frying pan toss. Children's activities include a snowman building contest and snow obstacle course. We will have warm fires going all day and hot food and drinks for a small fee. Please come out and celebrate winter in the outdoors with the Cooper Rock Foundation! A full schedule will be available on the Coopers Rock Foundation Web site soon! Go to www.coopersrock.org or call Gwen Jones at 304-599-5815 for more info.

CHAPTER OUTINGS

Sat, Jan 12

Coopers Rock Day Hike

rated moderate — Join us for a hike of about 7 miles. We will start at the Day-Use Lot, hike the Scott Run Trail, and then continue on the Roadside Trail to the Overlook. Plan is to eat lunch at the Overlook, and then hike back to the cars. Bring snack & water; trekking poles can be helpful; dress for the weather. Contact leader for directions, rendezvous location, and start time.

Leader: Aaron Vedock, 540-805-0019, amvedock@hotmail.com

Nearest town: Morgantown, WV

Web info: www.coopersrockstateforest.com; www.coopersrock.org

Sat, Feb 16

X-C skiing at Blackwater Falls SP

rated moderate — Cross-country ski on 5-6 miles of trails in Blackwater Falls State Park and Monongahela National Forest. The route will be from the Blackwater Falls Trading Post parking lot to Pase Point, with overlooks and great views of Blackwater Canyon. This outing is not for beginners; some moderate skill level on X-C skis is needed to enjoy this trip. All participants must supply their own equipment. Please pre-register with leader; outing will begin at 10 AM.

Leader: Brent Carminati, 304-567-2865, brentcar1@frontiernet.net

Nearest town: Davis, WV

Web info: www.blackwaterfalls.com

Maryland Chapter Outings

Our neighboring chapter to the east has an active outings program, with many trips coming into West Virginia or western Maryland. These outings, by highly experienced leaders, range from easy to strenuous, and are open to everyone. Join an outing by checking out their calendar at

maryland.sierraclub.org

Allegheny Group Outings

Sierra Club members in the Pittsburgh area belong to the Allegheny Group. They have a moderately active outings program as well as links to other local outdoor activities. Visit their website for an outings calendar and more details at

alleghenysc.org

Potomac Region Outings (PRO)

This is an activity section of the Sierra Club Virginia Chapter, with an extensive outings program run by leaders who live in and around the Washington, D.C., area. A calendar of activities, information and updates can be found on their website at

www.sierrapotomac.org

West Virginia Chapter Outings

For updated listings of outings sponsored by the West Virginia Chapter, check our Chapter website at

westvirginia.sierraclub.org

Abbreviations Used

AMC	Appalachian Mountain Club
AT	Appalachian Trail
GWNF	George Washington National Forest
JNF	Jefferson National Forest
MG	Monongahela Group
MNF	Monongahela National Forest
NPS	National Park Service
NRA	National Recreation Area
NWR	National Wildlife Refuge
PFD	Personal Flotation Device (lifejacket)
SF	State Forest
SP	State Park
SNP	Shenandoah National Park



Sierra Club

West Virginia Chapter
PO Box 4142
Morgantown, WV 26504
www.westvirginia.sierraclub.org

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West Virginia Sierra Club Chapter Directory

Chapter Executive Committee

Jim Sconyers, Chair, 304-698-9628
jimscon@gmail.com

* **Gary Nelson**, 304-258-6669
glnelson1@frontier.com

Jim Kotcon, 304-594-3322
jkotcon@wvu.edu

Gwen Jones, 304-599-5815
gwenjones23@yahoo.com

Frank Young, 304-372-3945
fyoung@mountain.net

* Chapter Delegate to National Sierra Club

Monongahela Group ExCom

Rodger Dotson, Chair, 304-216-1326
bhaddaka@yahoo.com

Gwen Jones, 304-599-5815
gwenjones23@yahoo.com

* **Nicole Good**, 304-208-5013
nicolegood.wv@gmail.com

Steve Runfola, 304-291-0770
stevenrunfola@yahoo.com

Carol Nix, 304-864-6411
almostnixie@cs.com

* Mon Group Delegate to Chapter ExCom

Other Chapter Leaders

Archives / Chapter History Kathy Gregg
304-473-8124, gregg@wvu.edu

Conservation Gwen Jones
304-599-5815, gwenjones23@yahoo.com

Energy Committee Jim Kotcon
304-594-3322, jkotcon@wvu.edu

Forest Watch Beth Little
304-653-4277, blittle@citynet.net

Marcellus Campaign Jim Kotcon
304-594-3322, jkotcon@wvu.edu

Membership (vacant)

Newsletter Editor Candice Elliott
304-594-3322, celliot2@comcast.net

Outings (vacant)

Co-Political Nicole Good, 304-208-5013
nicolegood.wv@gmail.com & Denise Binion,
304-669-0247, dbinion@gmail.com

Secretary Jonathan Rosenbaum
304-599-2370, jr@wvsierraclub.org

Sierra Student Coalition, WVU Joey James
james8@mix.wvu.edu

Treasurer Sally Wilts
304-379-7567, sallywilts@yahoo.com

Webmaster Paul Wilson
304-725-4360, pjgrunt@gmail.com

Regional Sierra Club Staff

WVSC Outreach Organizer Chuck Wyrstok
877-252-0257, outreach@marcellus-wv.com

Environmental Justice/Beyond Coal Bill Price
304-389-8822, bill.price@sierraclub.org

To Contact

CONGRESSIONAL DELEGATES

The Hon. John D. Rockefeller
Joe Manchin

US Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Phones: (202) 224-6472 (JR)
(202) 224-3954 (JM)

Fax: (202) 224-7665 (JR)
(202) 228-0002 (JM)

White House Comments Line:
(202) 456-1111 Fax: (202) 456-2461
Capitol Switchboard (202) 224-3121

The Hon. David McKinley
Shelley Moore Capito
Nick J. Rahall

US House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Phones: (202) 225-4172 (DM)
(202) 225-2711 (SMC)
(202) 225-3452 (NR)

Fax: (202) 225-7564 (DM)
(202) 225-7856 (SMC)
(202) 225-9061 (NR)

To Contact the GOVERNOR

Governor Earl Ray Tomblin
State Capitol
Charleston, WV 25305

Dial-the-Governor:
1-888-438-2731
email: governor@wvgov.org

To Contact STATE LEGISLATORS

email to WV Legislature:
cglagola@mail.wvnet.edu
(Put name of recipient under subject)

Messages for legislators can be left at:
1-877-565-3447 or 304-347-4836

Mail address:
Member, WV Senate or
House of Delegates
Bldg 1
State Capitol Complex
Charleston, WV 25305

website: www.legis.state.wv.us
has contact information for all state
legislators



Explore, enjoy and protect the planet

Preserve the Future

Not everyone can make a large gift to protect the environment during their lifetime, but you can preserve the environment for generations to come by remembering Sierra Club in your will. There are many gift options available. We can even help you plan a gift for your local Chapter.

For more information and confidential assistance, contact:

Sierra Club Gift Planning Program
85 Second St, Second Floor
San Francisco, CA 94105
gift.planning@sierraclub.org • (800) 932-4270

For planned giving in West Virginia, contact Paul Wilson at 304-725-4360

Inside this Issue

1

Shale Gas Drilling Bad for your Health

2

More On Health: What about the workers? • Workshop Schedule for
Citizen Coal Ash Permit Monitoring • Workshop Schedule for
Citizen Gas Well Watchers

3

View from the Chair: *Time to Overturn Citizens United* • Appalachian
Stewardship Foundation Awards 2012 Grants from
Longview Settlement • Membership Form

4

Mon Power's Billion Dollar Boondoggle • Wilderness Act
Nearly 50 Years Old

5

OUTINGS Winter 2013 — Mon Group and Chapter •
HELP WANTED: Chapter Needs a New Outings Chair
• Outings Liability Policies

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